

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5543

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MX

SUBJECT: W/W: ARREST AND DETENTION: PROBLEM OF AMERICAN
PRISONERS INCARCERATED IN MEXICO CITY.

REF: MEXICO'S 10803; 10804 AND 0083

1. AS REFERENCED TELEGRAMS INDICATE, PRISONER PROBLEM APPEARS TO BE BECOMING MORE SERIOUS SINCE PUBLICATION OF LOS ANGELES TIMES ARTICLES AND CONGRESSMAN STARK'S LETTER TO SECRETARY OF STATE. A NUMBER OF PARENTS AND PRISONERS WITH WHOM CONSULAR OFFICERS HAVE SPOKEN IN RECENT DAYS HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT EFFORTS TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF PRISONERS WITH CONGRESSMAN STARK'S SUPPORT WILL BE INTENSIFIED AND CONTINUE UNTIL, AS THEY ARE CONFIDENT, SUCCESS ACCHIEVED.

2. MANY EXPRESS THE UNSHAKEABLE BELIEF THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PLIGHT OF THE PRISONERS. IN THAT CONNECTION, EITHER AS A DELIBERATE TACTIC OR BECAUSE THEY ARE BEING MISLED, PRISONERS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS SEEM TO BE INCREASINGLY FOCUSING THEIR ATTENTION AND ATTACKS ON EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICERS. MANY WARN THAT IF PRISONER RELEASE IS NOT ACHIEVED SOON DIRE CONSEQUENCES WILL RESULT. AS THE FRUSTRATION AND DESPERATION OF THE PRISONERS AND THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS INCREASE, THEIR PROTEST METHODS AND ACTIVITIES IT IS BELIEVED, WILL BECOME MORE DESPERATE AND COULD RESULT IN VIOLENCE.

3. SIMULTANEOUSLY, NETTLED, ANNOYED AND ANGERED BY ADVERSE
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PUBLICITY AND PROVOCATION AND TROUBLE-MAKING BY AMERICAN PRISONERS,

LECUMBERRI AND LOS REYES PRISON AUTHORITIES HAVE STIFFENED THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS AMERICANS AND TAKEN AWAY A NUMBER OF THEIR PRIVILEGES. MEANWHILE, IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN PRISONERS WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AS U.S.-MEXICAN DRUG ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM IS INTENSIFIED.

4. IN SHORT, THINGS ARE LIKELY TO GET WORSE RATHER THAN BETTER.

5. WE BELIEVE THE ABOVE IS A REALISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION AND THAT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES TRYING TO DO MORE OF THE SAME ONLY BETTER WILL AVAIL US LITTLE, ESPECIALLY SINCE TO DO MORE WOULD REQUIRE ADDITIONAL PERSONAL AND FUNDS WHICH ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE. ACCORDINGLY, THE EMBASSY IS CONVINCED THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO FACE THE NEW REALITY THAT THE LARGE NUMBER OF JAILED AMERICAN YOUNG, EDUCATED, ARTICULATE MEMBERS (OR VICTIMS) OF OUR DRUG CULTURE, HAVING ACCESS TO A HIGHLY ARTICULATE SEGMENT OF CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC OPINION, HAS CREATED A SITUATION WHICH DEMANDS A RADICALLY NEW APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF PROTECTING AMERICAN WRONG-DOERS IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

6. THE EMBASSY SEES TWO ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS:

1) IMMEDIATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT WITH THE VIEW TOWARDS SECURING THE RETURN TO THE U.S. OF AMERICAN PRISONERS JAILED IN MEXICO, POSSIBLY AFTER SERVING A SPECIFIED PERIOD OF THEIR SENTENCES IN MEXICO.

2) APPROACHES TO CONGRESS FOR FUNDS AND TO THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT FOR AUTHORIZATION WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE USG TO PROVIDE ARRESTED AND IMPRISONED AMERICANS IN MEXICO WITH LEGAL, MEDICAL, DENTAL, DIETARY, REHABILITATION AND OTHER ASSISTANCE CONFORMING TO U.S. STANDARDS.

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